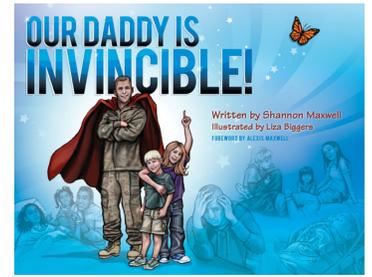


Our Daddy is Invincible!

By Shannon Maxwell

Our Daddy is Invincible is told through the eyes of military children who have watched a caregiver go to war and come home injured. This book is a reminder for both children and caregivers that no matter what life throws at them, the power of love and the unbreakable human spirit survives and thrives in all of us.

The book shares ways children can understand the difficult challenges their caregiver faces and how they can learn to not to be afraid.



Discussion and Questions:

- Expressing emotions can be challenging for children. Talk to them about feeling words and connect those words to their behavior. For example: "I see you're hitting the floor and stomping around — you must be mad."
- Families can create mementos for the children to have for comfort measures while the caregiver is away. They can also stay connected by creating scrapbooks, cards, or pictures to share.
- When the caregiver arrives home after a period of time, communicate with children the many emotions and changes individuals may be experiencing. Being honest about a person's disability or limitations will help the child know what to expect. Help them identify how they feel and how the family will work together to share feelings openly.
- Create comfort areas or items for use when the child may feel upset or anxious. This provides a safe zone to calm down and helps promote self-regulation. This could include a calming space in the house, a special blanket, a doll or animal, or any item that helps give comfort to the child.

Activities:

Ages Birth to 5:

- **Songs**
 - *Sometimes I Feel Happy* can be sung to any simple tune a caregiver or provider makes up.
Sometimes I feel happy, Sometimes I feel sad.
Sometimes I feel curious, Sometimes I feel mad.
Sometimes I feel silly, Sometimes I feel surprised.
How many feelings, Do I have inside?
 - For more song ideas by Jean Warren go to <https://bit.ly/2siGjaR>
 - *How Are You Feeling Today?* can be sung to the tune of Hickory Dickory Dock.
How are you feeling today?
Oh, how are you feeling today?
I'm happy and glad, happy and glad,
That's how I'm feeling today.

How are you feeling today?
Oh, how are you feeling today?
I'm grumpy and cross, grumpy and cross,
That's how I'm feeling today.
 - Repeat the verse with 'sleepy and tired', 'frightened and scared' or any other feelings that you might want to add.
 - For more ideas and crafts to go with the song, go to <https://bit.ly/2mrZU7X>

- **Injury Toolkit**

- Ask the family to gather items on hand that are used to comfort family members when they are hurt (i.e., bandages, gauze, alcohol pads, stuffed toys, stickers, candy, blankets, music, pacifiers, etc.). Place these items in a basket or bag to create an injury toolkit.
- Explain to the child what it means to be injured or hurt. Use language the child may understand such as “boo-boo” or “ouchie.” Ask them what things help them feel better when they are hurt.
- If children are able to answer verbally they should be encouraged to do so, and then select an item from the toolkit they find comforting. Young and nonverbal children can answer by pointing to or choosing an item from the toolkit. Take turns asking other family members to participate in the same way.
- Encourage the child to use the toolkit when they need help feeling better. They can also use the toolkit to help others who may be feeling hurt.
- Be sure to exclude medicine from the toolkit. Pictures or empty containers to represent medicine could be used instead.

Ages 3 to 5:

- **Stress Balls**

- Supplies: balloons, beans/rice/flour (for filling), a funnel, an unsharpened pencil
- Attach the funnel to the mouth of the balloon. Add the filler to the funnel. The unsharpened pencil can be used to push the filler into the base of the balloon. When the balloon reaches the desired size, tie the opening closed.
- Children can use the stress balls when they are experiencing strong emotions. Use caution and supervision with young children and those who may mouth items.

- **Playdough Faces**

- This activity allows children to learn emotion words that are associated with feelings in a fun way. Using playdough and a cartoon image of a face without features, caregivers can discuss different emotions and invite the child to use the dough to create a face that displays the emotion.

- **Using Emotion Face Cards**

- There are a variety of different ways to use emotion cards to help children identify feelings and begin to consider the feelings of others. For these examples use a stack of cards with different emotion faces represented on each one. See the link below for information on how to make cards for this activity.
 - Choose a card at random from the stack of feeling face cards. The person who drew the card should attempt to mimic the face on the card. The other person should try to guess what particular emotion is on the card.
 - Choose a card, name the emotion, and discuss ways someone could support a friend who might be feeling this way. To take this one step further, set out several stuffed animals or dolls. Place an emotion card on each one. Invite the child to speak to the toy as if they were feeling those emotions. This can help the child practice empathy and ways to be a friend.
 - For additional ideas, go to <https://bit.ly/2yox5gl>